

funded program called Breakthrough Propulsion Physics. The idea is to figure out how to build spaceships that bypass the rules of physics and carry human beings far into the universe faster than the speed of light. Inside the rocket-scientist fraternity of NASA, these guys stand out: they're serious researchers who actually use sci-fi terms like "warp drive" and "gravity shield." Millis rides herd over the group, organizing workshops and extracting the big ideas while filtering out the nutty ones.

For Millis the job began in 1990. At a workshop he made a presentation titled "Unsolved Problems: Propelling Spacecraft Without Rockets." Quietly, a few likeminded souls introduced themselves, even though "these kinds of topics were . . . the polite way to say it is 'too far away from fruition for sponsorship'," says Millis. In other words, crazy. Then in 1995 NASA started the Advanced Space Transportation Program at Marshall Space Flight Center, seeking to improve space exploration with traditional technology. "Someone asked, 'What about things like manipulating gravity? Is this light-speed thing still a showstopper?' Stuff like that," says Millis. "And one of the Marshall people tracked me down."

It turned out there were plenty of ideas out there. At Caltech, a physicist named Kip Thorne was investigating what it would take to construct a person-size wormhole, a short-cut that tunnels through space-time, the quantum-mechanical fabric of the universe. A University of Wales physicist named Miguel Alcubierre proposed that a ship could exceed the speed of light by compressing space-time in front and expanding it behind—your basic science-fictional warp drive. Quantum physicists were trying to figure out how photons, particles of light, seem to accelerate past light speed when they tunnel through an obstacle. Only one idea is actually being tested: researchers at Marshall's Space Sciences Lab are trying to replicate experiments said to show reduced gravity above a spinning superconductive disc. But designing an experiment that eliminates external influences has proved difficult. "It's fascinating," says David Noever, the researcher leading the project, "but you have to be very careful."

Needless to say, the Breakthrough Propulsion Physics program is controversial. "NASA is a place that builds things, not a place to try and take ideas which are decades, if not hundreds of years, from fruition and try to build working prototypes," says Lawrence Krauss, a physicist at Case Western Reserve and author of "The Physics of 'Star Trek'." Thorne, the wormhole expert, is starting to think that fundamental physics forbids traversable, human-size wormholes. And then there's the money issue. "So far Millis's activity has not spent much government money," says Gerald Smith, a physicist at Penn State. "Advanced propulsion is a very tough area, and NASA's not putting much money into it. Those of us who are doing work in it don't see it wasted."

Millis knows he's not likely to be making the jump to hyperspace any time soon. But the program continues to gain speed—in February the Marshall center ran a weeklong workshop on breakthrough propulsion. Next year Millis hopes to award a few small grants to researchers in the field. "There's a few people that these subjects will make nervous," he says, "but there seems to be a greater number who find it exciting." They're the ones without the patience to wait to reach the stars.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on September 17, 1998, I was unavoidably detained during rollcall vote No. 446, on agreeing to the resolution to provide for consideration of H.R. 4569, a bill to appropriate funds for foreign operations in FY 99. Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted "no" on the resolution.

IN MEMORY OF MARK FIELDS
(1978-1997): WE MUST PRESS FORWARD
IN THE FIGHT AGAINST
CANCER

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, this weekend cancer survivors from across America will gather in Washington for "The March—Coming Together to Conquer Cancer," a crusade to strengthen cancer research and improve methods of treatment. As we join together in support of this important event, I believe that it is appropriate to recall the spirit of one who would not let this vicious disease destroy his good heart and dauntless soul.

I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Mark Fields, a brave young man from San Mateo, California, who passed away thirteen months ago after a four year fight against leukemia. Mark was an intelligent, articulate teenager with interests not unlike those of most boys and girls his age—computers, Camaros, cycling, and Star Trek. The obstacles he faced, however, were far from typical.

Mark was an exceptional individual not because of his cancer—tens of thousands of children and adolescents are diagnosed with this awful disease every year—but rather as a result of his perseverance in pursuing his dreams and desires at a time when he would have been excused for allowing his spirit to be suppressed by chemotherapy, pain, and fear.

Mark's inspiring character is best reflected in a letter which he wrote to President Clinton on February 11, 1997, urging that all children's hospitals be equipped with computers to help children continue their school work during periods of illness. He eloquently used his personal experiences as a child with cancer to articulate the need for such a program.

Mark Fields was not able to pursue his dream of a college degree, and he did not have the opportunity to work with President Clinton to place computers in children's hospitals across America. He passed away on August 28, 1997, just six months after he authored this letter. Mark's fight is now our fight, and our efforts on behalf of children with cancer must be furthered in his memory.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter Mark's letter to President Clinton into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

San Mateo, CA, February 11, 1997.

President WILLIAM CLINTON,
The White House, Washington, DC.
Subject: Children's Hospital Computers

DEAR PRESIDENT CLINTON: I listened to your State of the Union Address and I was very pleased to hear that you have asked that all children's hospitals be equipped with computers to help children keep up with their school work.

I am very interested in this plan because I spent two and half years receiving medical treatment for leukemia at Lucille Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford, California. During this period, I spent what amounted to seven and a half months overnight at the hospital, with my longest stay being 45 days. Thankfully, those treatments are nearly two years behind me and I am feeling great.

During my treatments I was able to complete some high school credits by working with home tutors, but while I was in the hospital, I was definitely alone and out of touch with my school, my teachers and my classmates. This is why I know your plan is definitely needed.

Also, while I was at Children's Hospital, I was asked to participate in the Starbright Foundations's computer link of five major children's hospitals across the nation. This is an excellent way for children from one hospital to connect with children in another hospital. It offers the ability to "chat" and play games on-line, but a connection to schools is definitely needed. Your plan might work well with the Starbright program.

During my senior year I have worked at a local computer store and have realized my interest and abilities are in the computer field, and I will earn a college degree in computer science.

I not only commend you for your hospital computer plan, I would also like to offer you my services. Since I am in the unique position of having been a patient at a children's hospital as well as being very computer literate, I would appreciate the opportunity to assist you in whatever way I can.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully yours,

Mark Fields.

TRIBUTE TO THE INDIANA STATE
LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN
AMERICAN CITIZENS

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 25, 1998

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to pay tribute to the Indiana State League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), as it hosts the 1998 LULAC Midwest Conference. This year's conference, titled "Money Management and the Tools to Make It Work," is being held on Saturday, September 26, 1998, in Hammond, Indiana. Giving the conference's keynote address is Rick Dovalina, LULAC's National President. He was elected this Fourth of July at the conclusion of the LULAC National Convention. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend Augustine Sanchez, Midwest LULAC Vice President, and the Indiana LULAC state officers, Maria D. Pizana, Terry Serna, Vickie Lipniskis, Belinda Medellin, Dave Jones, Amelia Velez, Louise Martinez, Alicia Rios, and Greg Chavez, for the leadership they have displayed in organizing this important event. Hosting the LULAC Midwest Conference is an honor and a challenge which the Indiana State LULAC has met with vigor and excitement.

Founded in 1929 in Corpus Christi, Texas, LULAC was established to protect the Constitutional rights and freedoms of Hispanic-